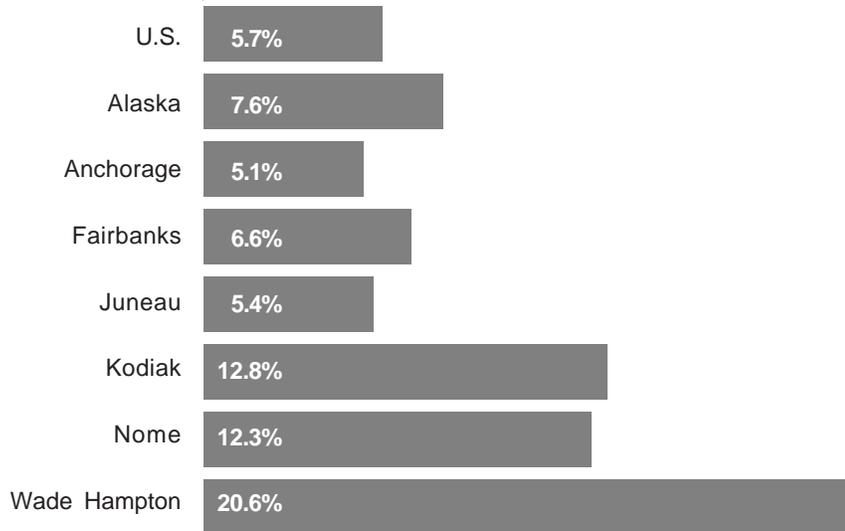


Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
News Release

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Unemployment Climbs in December

December Unemployment for Selected Areas



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section
 CA indicates census area; other areas are boroughs. All rates not seasonally adjusted

(Detailed table on reverse)

Alaska Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment

	preliminary		revised	Changes from		
	12/02	11/02		12/01	11/02	12/01
Total Nonagricultural Employment	283,900	287,200	279,800	-3,300	4,100	
Mining	9,500	9,700	10,100	-200	-600	
Construction	13,400	14,600	12,900	-1,200	500	
Manufacturing	7,400	9,300	7,600	-1,900	-200	
Transportation, Commun. & Utilities	26,000	26,400	26,400	-400	-400	
Trade	58,500	58,500	58,300	0	200	
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	12,700	12,700	12,800	0	-100	
Services & Misc.	74,100	73,700	71,300	400	2,800	
Government	82,300	82,300	80,400	0	1,900	

Government includes employees of public schools, the University of Alaska, and certain federally-recognized tribal entities.
 Benchmark date: March 2001

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

December 2002:	Alaska 7.4%	U.S. 6.0%
November 2002:	Alaska 6.8%	U.S. 6.0%
December 2001:	Alaska 6.0%	U.S. 5.8%

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Alaska's unemployment rate rose to 7.6 percent in December, up nine-tenths of a percentage point from November's rate of 6.7 percent. The comparable national rate was unchanged from November to December at 5.7 percent. Dan Robinson, a labor economist with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, reported the numbers.

The average November-to-December increase over the last decade is two to three-tenths of a percentage point, so the magnitude of this year's increase is noteworthy. At 7.6 percent, the rate is now significantly higher than December 2001's rate of 6.2 percent.

Several factors contributed to the unusually large increase. Claims for unemployment insurance were up 15 percent in December. Also, the monthly sample survey of Alaska households shows a marked increase in unemployment. The household survey adds an important piece to the puzzle because it attempts to count unemployed Alaskans who have not claimed unemployment insurance benefits, either because they are not eligible or for other reasons.

Employment estimates from November to December dropped, following the normal seasonal pattern. The state is still showing over-the-year growth. This month's numbers continue a pattern that has repeated itself for much of the last year: modest but steady growth in employment combined with a higher rate of growth in unemployment.

The weak national economy may be an indirect cause of higher unemployment in Alaska. During the booming economy of the late 90s, the prospect of plentiful jobs in the lower 48 undoubtedly lured many jobless Alaskans south. The current national economy has less to offer and more jobless Alaskans may be deciding to stay in the state to look for work.

The woes of Alaska's fishing industry also may be playing a part. Self-employed commercial fishers may once have been able to earn enough money during the fishing season to remain out of the labor market for the rest of the year. Lower prices and smaller profits may be forcing many of them out of the industry or at least causing them to seek jobs during the off-season.

Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau all saw moderate increases in their unemployment rates, although they remain below the statewide level. The highest regional unemployment rates continue to be in the Southwest, Gulf Coast, and Northern Regions.

Labor Force by Region and Census Area

	Labor Force			Unemployment			Rate			Employment		
	12/02	11/02	12/01	12/02	11/02	12/01	12/02	11/02	12/01	12/02	11/02	12/01
Alaska Statewide	327,534	328,415	316,673	24,737	21,851	19,640	7.6	6.7	6.2	302,797	306,564	297,033
Anchorage/Mat-Su Region	184,962	184,418	177,852	10,845	9,720	8,163	5.9	5.3	4.6	174,117	174,698	169,689
Municipality of Anchorage	150,693	150,423	146,542	7,759	7,021	5,839	5.1	4.7	4.0	142,934	143,402	140,703
Mat-Su Borough	34,269	33,995	31,310	3,086	2,699	2,324	9.0	7.9	7.4	31,183	31,296	28,986
Gulf Coast Region	31,977	32,733	30,923	4,182	3,453	3,473	13.1	10.5	11.2	27,795	29,280	27,450
Kenai Peninsula Borough	20,505	21,127	19,686	2,688	2,358	2,090	13.1	11.2	10.6	17,817	18,769	17,596
Kodiak Island Borough	6,611	6,589	6,600	843	513	904	12.8	7.8	13.7	5,768	6,076	5,696
Valdez-Cordova CA	4,861	5,016	4,637	651	581	479	13.4	11.6	10.3	4,210	4,435	4,158
Interior Region	50,536	50,826	48,827	3,841	3,471	3,044	7.6	6.8	6.2	46,695	47,355	45,783
Denali Borough	1,233	1,266	1,156	170	188	114	13.8	14.8	9.9	1,063	1,078	1,042
Fairbanks North Star Bor.	44,380	44,696	43,013	2,920	2,650	2,363	6.6	5.9	5.5	41,460	42,046	40,650
Southeast Fairbanks CA	2,724	2,676	2,589	383	302	294	14.1	11.3	11.4	2,341	2,374	2,295
Yukon-Koyukuk CA	2,200	2,189	2,068	368	331	272	16.7	15.1	13.2	1,832	1,858	1,796
Northern Region	8,890	8,822	8,891	1,111	1,069	773	12.5	12.1	8.7	7,779	7,753	8,118
Nome Census Area	3,326	3,262	3,345	409	355	301	12.3	10.9	9.0	2,917	2,907	3,044
North Slope Borough	3,325	3,359	3,346	320	364	210	9.6	10.8	6.3	3,005	2,995	3,136
Northwest Arctic Borough	2,239	2,201	2,199	382	350	261	17.1	15.9	11.9	1,857	1,851	1,938
Southeast Region	38,143	38,082	37,659	2,988	2,552	2,930	7.8	6.7	7.8	35,155	35,530	34,729
Haines Borough	1,234	1,224	1,207	172	151	158	13.9	12.3	13.1	1,062	1,073	1,049
Juneau Borough	16,475	16,565	16,205	895	819	814	5.4	4.9	5.0	15,580	15,746	15,391
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	7,376	7,416	7,294	629	597	629	8.5	8.1	8.6	6,747	6,819	6,665
Pr. of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	2,985	2,936	3,023	325	247	395	10.9	8.4	13.1	2,660	2,689	2,628
Sitka Borough	4,210	4,193	4,119	293	235	250	7.0	5.6	6.1	3,917	3,958	3,869
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	2,073	2,100	2,086	234	242	270	11.3	11.5	12.9	1,839	1,858	1,816
Wrangell-Petersburg CA	3,485	3,347	3,422	399	228	373	11.4	6.8	10.9	3,086	3,119	3,049
Yakutat Borough	305	300	303	41	33	42	13.4	11.0	13.9	264	267	261
Southwest Region	13,027	13,534	12,523	1,771	1,586	1,259	13.6	11.7	10.1	11,256	11,948	11,264
Aleutians East Borough	1,317	1,387	1,281	88	83	52	6.7	6.0	4.1	1,229	1,304	1,229
Aleutians West Census Area	1,808	1,892	1,735	257	246	183	14.2	13.0	10.5	1,551	1,646	1,552
Bethel Census Area	5,432	5,655	5,202	697	629	464	12.8	11.1	8.9	4,735	5,026	4,738
Bristol Bay Borough	423	439	441	50	43	68	11.8	9.8	15.4	373	396	373
Dillingham Census Area	1,580	1,640	1,519	208	183	146	13.2	11.2	9.6	1,372	1,457	1,373
Lake & Peninsula Borough	534	547	527	72	57	65	13.5	10.4	12.3	462	490	462
Wade Hampton CA	1,934	1,975	1,817	399	345	281	20.6	17.5	15.5	1,535	1,630	1,536

Benchmark: March 2001

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section. • Comparisons between different time periods are not as

meaningful as other time series produced by Research and Analysis. • The official definition of unemployment currently in place excludes anyone who has not made an active attempt to find work in the four-week period up to and including the week that includes the 12th of the reference month. Due to the scarcity of employment opportunities in rural Alaska locations, many individuals do not meet the official definition of unemployed because they have not conducted an active job search. These individuals are considered not in the labor force.